



Trends in California teacher demand: a county and regional perspective



Summary



Institute of Education Sciences

U.S. Department of Education



Trends in California teacher demand: a county and regional perspective

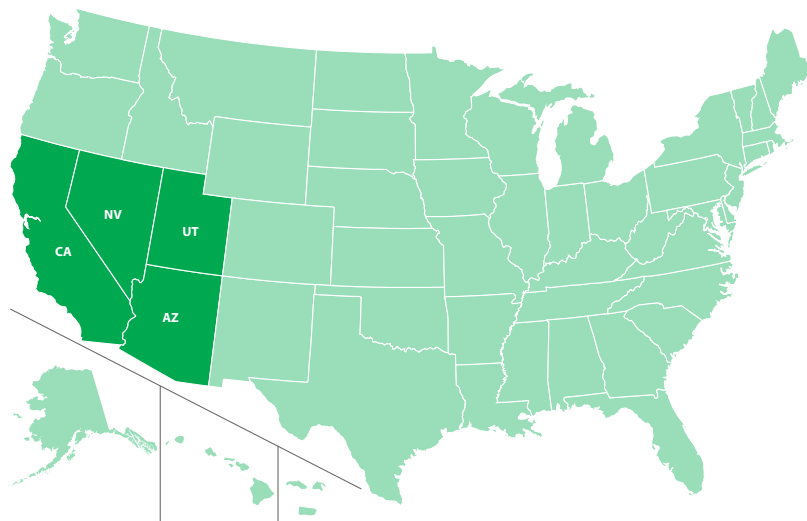
Summary

July 2008

Prepared by

Melissa Eiler White
WestEd

Anthony B. Fong
WestEd



Issues & Answers is an ongoing series of reports from short-term Fast Response Projects conducted by the regional educational laboratories on current education issues of importance at local, state, and regional levels. Fast Response Project topics change to reflect new issues, as identified through lab outreach and requests for assistance from policymakers and educators at state and local levels and from communities, businesses, parents, families, and youth. All Issues & Answers reports meet Institute of Education Sciences standards for scientifically valid research.

July 2008

This report was prepared for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) under Contract ED-06-CO-0014 by Regional Educational Laboratory West administered by WestEd. The content of the publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

This report is in the public domain. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, it should be cited as:

White, M.E., and Fong, A.B. (2008). *Trends in California teacher demand: a county and regional perspective* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2008–No. 057). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

This report is available on the regional educational laboratory web site at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

Trends in California teacher demand: a county and regional perspective

The report highlights the differences among California's counties and regions in their use of underprepared teachers and their needs for new teachers in the coming decade as driven by projected student enrollment changes and teacher retirements. The findings show county and regional variations in key factors that influence teacher labor markets.

If every California K–12 classroom is to have a fully credentialed teacher, state policymakers and other education decisionmakers must monitor the teacher labor market and take action when possible to ensure an adequate supply of teachers. Previous analyses of California's teacher supply and demand have contributed substantially to the understanding of the overall dynamics of the teacher labor force at a statewide level (for example, Guha et al. 2006; Esch et al. 2005).

However, finer grained analyses of labor market variables could provide valuable information for addressing the teacher supply issue, especially considering research that suggests the local nature of teacher labor markets (Martin 2003; Boyd et al. 2005) and the regional variation in certain key labor market variables (Guha et al. 2006). This report highlights the differences among California's counties and regions (clusters of contiguous counties) in

their use of underprepared teachers (defined as teachers who have not completed a teacher preparation program and attained a preliminary or professional clear credential¹) and their need for new teachers in the coming decade, as driven by projected student enrollment and teacher retirement. Although this report does not analyze projected county-level attrition or new teacher supply, its findings highlight county and regional variations in key factors that influence teacher labor markets.

Using data from state agencies, researchers examined three variables: current use of underprepared teachers, projected enrollment-generated demand for teachers, and projected teacher retirement-generated demand. The findings reveal differences in how these variables play out across California counties and regions. For example, while the use of underprepared teachers averaged 6 percent statewide in 2005/06, in 2 counties underprepared teachers accounted for more than 10 percent of the teacher workforce and in 16 for less than 2 percent. Likewise, while 21 of California's 58 counties will likely experience double-digit enrollment growth as a percentage of current enrollment over the next decade, 22 counties are expected to see declining student numbers. Finally, more than 40 percentage points divide counties with the highest projected

teacher retirement rates from those with the lowest. When the two sets of projections were combined to show the net effect of retirement growth and student enrollment growth, there was a spread of 64 percentage points between the county facing the highest projected demand (68 percent) and the county facing the lowest demand (4 percent). Because this analysis was unable to account for nonretirement attrition, these estimates may not reflect the total number of teachers needed over the decade.

The analyses, based on expected teacher retirements and student enrollment growth, suggest that California's Central Valley (North and South San Joaquin Valley and Upper and Sacramento Metropolitan Valley) and Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties) will face some of the highest demand for new teachers in the coming decade. This demand will come on top of other challenges facing most of these regions, including high poverty rates, low educational attainment, and diverse student populations. It is not possible to predict any resulting teacher supply-demand imbalances, however, without a complete analysis of all the teacher labor market variables in these and other regions, which this report does not provide.

As local decisionmakers consider the implications of the information provided in this report, they may want to seek out additional county- or district-level data for a fuller picture of regional teacher labor markets. Further investigation at the state level, such as research into the degree to which new teacher supply in California is localized rather than uniform across the state, could help state policymakers as they consider what interventions might effectively address the anticipated differential demand for new teachers across counties and regions. When the state's new longitudinal teacher database becomes available in a few years, it could facilitate a more complete analysis of the regional teacher labor market issues that this report highlights.

July 2008

Note

1. California grants preliminary teaching credentials to candidates who have successfully completed either a traditional fifth year or a blended teacher preparation program that includes student teaching and have passed various examinations; teachers must progress to a clear credential within five years (Loeb and Miller 2006).